Evaluation for Performance:

Toolkit for Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs

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James M. O'Neill, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Psychology Department
Madonna University, Livonia, MI;
O'Neill Consulting, Chelsea, MI

Judith M. Pasquarella, M.P.A.
Manager, Education Section
Office of Drug Control Policy
Michigan Department of Community Health

Henry J. Hastings, J.D., Ed.D.
Acting Director, Michigan Institute for Safe Schools and Communities
College of Education, Michigan State University

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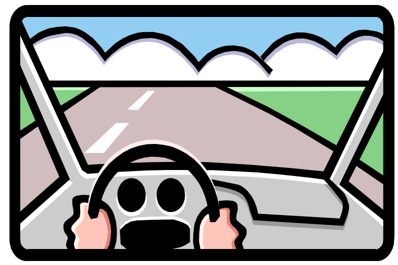
Chapter 3
Process Evaluation:
Assessing Program Performance

What is process evaluation?



Process evaluation involves monitoring various aspects of programming such as planning, implementation, improvements and stakeholder reactions. Process evaluation is similar to assessing the "journey" taken, such as the road map, distance traveled, turns, dead ends, maintenance, repairs and driver/passenger reactions along the way. Assessing the journey helps you stay on the right road toward your "destination," which is your *outcome performance goal(s)/measure(s)*.

Why should I conduct a process evaluation?

It should be clear by now why outcome evaluation is important: to show that student violence, ATOD use and related attitudes have been reduced or eliminated. *Outcome evaluation* answers the question, "Did we get there?" But why is process evaluation – the journey – so important? Isn't it enough to just pick a program and run it?

Think of your *program* as a car. Would you buy a car or continue to drive it without knowing about the key aspects of the car in relation to its design, intended use and its reliability? For example, you would likely want to know if the car was made by a trusted manufacturer. For what purposes could the car be used? Are people adequately trained to use all its features? What type and how many drivers and passengers have used the car? Would customers purchase a similar car in the future, or recommend the car to others?

Similar process evaluation questions can and should be asked about your program. For example, is the program developer a credible source for prevention programs? For what prevention goals and with what population(s) should the program be used? Was staff properly trained to implement the program? What type and how many staff and students were involved in the program? What were the reactions of students, staff and administrators to the program?

Although process evaluation is different from outcome evaluation, they complement each other because knowing how well the process went allows you to more clearly determine the value of your outcomes. Plus, your process evaluation results can be shared with ODCP and local SDFS Coordinators so they can utilize your successful efforts to achieve their outcome goal(s).

What are the steps in completing a process evaluation?

This chapter describes the major steps and activities to conduct a process evaluation, whereas Chapter 4 will cover outcome evaluation.

The table on the following page consists of four steps and related questions to complete your process evaluation. The steps involve the collection of information about the journey: planning, implementing, refining and stakeholder reactions.   Completion of each step is essential to gauge the full performance of any program.

Evaluation Step	Process Evaluation Questions
1. Focus on Performance: Use Performance Questions	a. Were facilitators adequately trained to conduct the program or provide the strategy/service? b. Have all planned activities been implemented with *fidelity* in all intended classrooms/schools? Were they accomplished on schedule? If not, what remains to be done? c. Were there any obstacles/challenges? If so, what steps were taken to remedy the problem(s)/obstacle(s)? d. What were the reactions of the students, staff and administrators to the program? e. What changes occurred in leadership or personnel? What effect did these changes have?
2. Choose the Best Gauges: Select Indicators, Measures and Sources	a. What process indicators will be measured to answer the performance questions? b. What measures will be used? c. What information source(s) will be used?
3. Check the Gauges - What Do They Say: Collect, Organize and Summarize Information	a. Who will collect the data? When? b. Who will enter/organize the data? When? c. In what format(s) (numbers, words, graphs) will the data be summarized? d. What are the answers to the performance questions in Step 1? e. How and when will the results be reported to stakeholders?
4. Enhance Performance: Make Program Adjustments and Increase Sustainability	a. How will the information be used to enhance the program while preserving fidelity? b. How will the information be used to increase sustainability?

The next section provides detailed information about completing each step of the process evaluation, followed by a complete example. A checklist is provided at the end of the chapter to use as a roadmap for conducting your own process evaluation.

Step 1: Focus on Performance: Use Performance Questions

The standards for process evaluation have been converted to the following six questions that each local SDFS Coordinator will address in their reports to ODCP. The questions provide a focus that will most likely to result in successful processes and, ultimately, outcomes.

1a. Were facilitators adequately trained to conduct the program or provide the strategy/service? Even with commercially available curricular programs, staff should be trained to administer the program. The same is true for prevention strategies or services. In your answer, describe the extent to which the staff was trained to conduct the program, and the need for any further training.

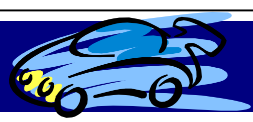
> **Testimonial**
>
> Peer Mediation/Conflict Manager Programs are very staff-driven due to the logistics of providing staff awareness, student recruitment and peer mediator maintenance. It is also important to note that utilization [in the ISD] went up . . . as the new program manager became more knowledgeable and comfortable with the process.
>
> *Jenny Branch Sailor, Ed.S., M.P.H.*
> *Berrien County ISD*

1b. Have all planned activities been implemented with fidelity in all intended classrooms/ schools? Were they accomplished on schedule? If not, what remains to be done? Describe "what, when and how much" as they relate to completed program components, as well as the plan to complete any remaining components.

1c. What were the reactions of the students, staff and administrators to the program? Reactions from stakeholders will help determine the "climate" of attitudes (e.g., buy-in and support) related to your program and the need to provide additional efforts to promote an environment conducive to prevention. Note that stakeholder reactions, such as student satisfaction with the program, are not considered a program outcome because they do not address your outcome goal(s) of attitude/behavioral change related to drugs/violence; there's a big difference between program popularity and student outcomes.

1d. Were there any obstacles/challenges? If so, what steps were taken to remedy the problem(s)/obstacle(s)? Road blocks and even dead ends are not uncommon in programs, and can include problems in awareness and buy-in from staff and administrators, planning, implementation, and participation, among others. Monitoring these issues and your efforts to resolve them will promote better programming and outcomes. In addition, challenges related to training, program fit, support resources and other programmatic elements provide a real-world context for others in the prevention learning community.

1e. What changes occurred in leadership or personnel? What effect did these changes have? Strong, sustained, supportive leadership and personnel are the ideal. Describe any changes in leadership or personnel that seemed to enhance or diminish your program efforts or outcomes.

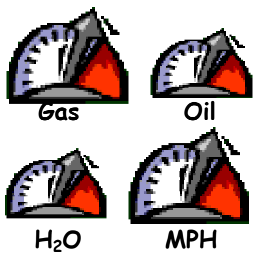


Process Evaluation
High-Performance Questions

In addition to the basic performance questions listed in Step 1, choose any of the following questions to enhance your efforts to monitor your program's "journey":

- ☐ What elements of the program seemed most important? Why?
- ☐ What type of maintenance and adaptation to the program was required to successfully implement it?
- ☐ Which elements of the program required the most effort regarding planning or implementation? How well did your resources (staff, funding) support these elements?
- ☐ How informed were non-program staff about the program? How well did they reinforce the primary messages of the program?
- ☐ How aware of, involved in, and satisfied with the program were the students' parents?
- ☐ How can community partners be used to enhance the program and/or its implementation?

Step 2: Choose the Best Gauges: Select Indicators, Measures and Sources



Step 2 is designed to help you select the best and most convenient ***indicators*** (the type of information collected), ***measures*** (the tool used to collect the information) and ***sources*** (the people/places from which to collect the information):

The following table provides suggested indicators, measures and sources that adequately address each process evaluation performance question from Step 1. Although these indicators, measures and sources are easy to utilize, make sure that they are feasible in light of your program resources.

Process Evaluation Performance Question	Indicator(s)	Measure(s)	Source(s)
1a. Were facilitators adequately trained to conduct the program or provide the strategy/service?	(a) percent of facilitators who completed training; (b) satisfaction with training	(a,b) brief post-training survey	(a,b) program facilitators
1b. Have all planned activities been implemented with fidelity in all intended classrooms/schools? Were they accomplished on schedule? If not, what remains to be done?	(a) percent of planned vs. actual activities implemented with fidelity; (b) percent of planned vs. actual program sites; (c) participant attendance rate	(a, b) brief mid-year and year-end survey; (c) attendance records	(a, b) program facilitators, site teams; (c) participants
1c. Were there any obstacles/challenges? If so, what steps were taken to remedy the problem(s)/obstacle(s)?	Narrative description of obstacle(s) and corrective steps planned/taken	Notes from meetings and observations	SDFS coordinator; program facilitators; site teams; school administrators
1d. What were the reactions of the students, staff and administrators to the program?	(a) rating of satisfaction; (b) reactions from staff and administrators	(a) brief survey or focus group, (b) meeting notes	(a) students, (b) staff, and administrators
1e. What changes occurred in leadership or personnel? What effect did these changes have?	Narrative description of changes and perceived impact on program	Notes from meetings and observations	SDFS coordinator; program facilitators; site team; school administrators

As shown in the Table, many of these questions can be measured using brief surveys, focus groups, or notes from meetings or observations. Brief surveys and focus group protocols to assess questions 1a, 1b, and 1d are provided in Appendix B: Toolbox of Measures and Resources. Note that items to assess student satisfaction with the program are included on each post-test survey, in addition to the items which assess drug use, violence and/or related attitudes.

Helpful Hint: More is Smarter

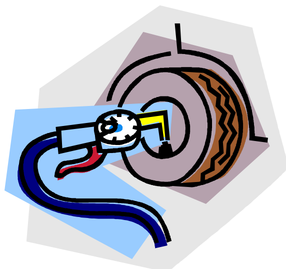
For some indicators, it might be helpful to collect information from more than one source. For example, information about very young students' attitudes toward the program could be collected both from the students and from the staff. The students could provide feedback on a simple question, (e.g., How much did you like the program?), whereas the staff could assess the students' reactions to various elements of the program (e.g., information, role playing).

In addition to the economy model questions provided in Step 1, you may have developed additional or "high-performance" process performance questions. If so, use the following tables to identify possible indicators, measures and sources. Please note that there may be valuable process evaluation indicators, measures and sources that are not listed in the tables, and you are encouraged to consider others – just check with ODCP for guidance.

Common Process Evaluation Indicators for Prevention Programs		
Program Planning	**Program Implementation**	**Program Participation**
☐ Level of awareness and buy-in among administrators ☐ Level of awareness and buy-in among staff (including non-program staff) ☐ Frequency of planning meetings ☐ Number of program sites ☐ Presence/quality of site-based leadership teams for program ☐ Percent of facilitators/ teachers trained ☐ Type and degree of parental involvement in planning meetings ☐ Type and degree of collaboration with community partners in planning process ☐ Cost of program, training, implementation and support	☐ Planned vs. actual duration of program ☐ Percent of program components implemented with fidelity (e.g., curriculum, transfer training activities, services) ☐ Percent of sessions implemented with fidelity (for curricular components) ☐ Type of changes made to program components/sessions (inc. reason) ☐ Level of staff satisfaction with program implementation ☐ Type and degree of parental involvement in implementation ☐ Type and degree of collaboration with community partners in implementation	☐ Number and type of participants ☐ Type of participants ☐ Level of attendance ☐ Level of participant attitude/ cooperation toward program and staff

Common Measures and Sources for Prevention Programs	
Measures (For more information, see Chapter 4, p. 36)	**Sources**
☐ Self-report surveys ☐ Focus groups ☐ Records ☐ Checklists ☐ Observations	☐ Administrators ☐ Teachers/facilitators ☐ Other staff ☐ Parents ☐ Students ☐ Community partners

Step 3: Check the Gauges - What Do They Say: Collect, Organize and Summarize Information



Checking the gauges first involves identifying people who can assist you in collecting and entering/organizing the process information.

3a. Who will collect the data? The most likely persons are those who administer or deliver the program, because they are usually the first to know how well the program is running and can collect the information as part of their routine. Also, they are usually the first to gauge how well a program is running and realize the need for any tune-ups.

3b. Who will enter/organize the data? A useful way to keep track of data collection and organization/entry is to develop a schedule which identifies the following for each indicator: (a) the measure and source used, (b) the data collection person and completion date, and (c) the data organization/entry person and completion date. The following is a sample completed form (see Appendix B for blank form).

Example
Data Collection/Organization/Entry Form

Indicator	Measure and Source	Data collection		Data entry/organization	
		Person(s)	Completion date	Person(s)	Completion date
(a) % of facilitators who completed training; (b) satisfaction with training	(a,b) brief post-training survey of program facilitators	SDFS coordinator	Oct.	admin. asst.	December
(a) % of planned vs. actual activities implemented with fidelity; (b) % of planned vs. actual program sites; (c) participant attendance rate	(a, b) brief mid-year and year-end survey of program facilitators; (c) participant attendance records	(a, b) SDFS coordinator; (c) facilitators	Dec. & June	admin. asst.	Dec. & June
narrative description of obstacle(s) and corrective steps planned/taken	SDFS coordinator's notes from meetings with program facilitators and administrators	SDFS coordinator	May	admin. asst.	June
(a) rating of student satisfaction; (b) reactions from staff and administrators	(a) brief survey or focus group with students, (b) notes from meeting with staff and administrators	(a, b) evaluator, (c) SDFS coordinator	Dec. & June	(a, b) evaluator, (c) admin. asst.	Dec. & June
narrative description of changes and perceived impact on program	SDFS coordinator's notes from meetings with program facilitators and administrators	SDFS coordinator	June	admin. asst.	July
narrative description of lessons learned	Results from all measures utilized in process evaluation	SDFS coordinator	June	SDFS coordinator	July

Below are some other helpful hints when collecting, organizing and entering process data.

Helpful Hints
Process Data Collection, Organization and Entry

Keep in mind these helpful hints when collecting and entering/managing process data:

- **Data collection, entry and management are ongoing processes** that can be time-consuming, depending on the magnitude of your program efforts. Plan enough time and people to complete it in a timely manner.
- **Make data collection routine**. For example, set aside a few minutes after each activity and/or as part of team meetings to review progress, obstacles, and next steps.
- **Make data collection easy**. Whenever possible, use existing sources (e.g., meeting minutes) and simple measures (e.g., brief checklists, focus groups, surveys).
- **Directions for completing measures** should be clear and followed by everyone.
- **Before collecting data, share information with respondents** about the purpose of the data collection, the information requested, the privacy of their responses and right to withdraw from participating in the evaluation at any time.
- **Consider the use of online surveys** to assess process indicators such as staff/administrator buy-in, implementation and participation satisfaction. Suggestions for software programs for conducting free surveys online are available in the Appendix, under "Additional Resources."
- **Consider the use of "Scantron" forms** to expedite the data entry process. Contact your district or ISD for more information.
- **Manually collected data** can be entered and managed efficiently in a computer-based "spreadsheet" program.

Step 3 also involves summarizing/aggregating information collected on the process indicators. Summarizing information can be facilitated by considering the following three questions:

3c. In what format(s) (numbers, words, graphs) will the data be summarized? Just as with measures, information can be summarized quantitatively and qualitatively. Generally, the strengths of *quantitative data* offset the weakness of *qualitative data*, and vice versa; therefore, it is recommended that you utilize both in your process evaluation. Quantitative summaries are ideal for large amounts of information, which can be reported using descriptive statistics such as percentages or means and standard deviations.

Helpful Hint: Find a Good Mechanic

Make sure you choose a person or a team familiar with various methods to collect and summarize both qualitative and quantitative information. If you need assistance from a professional evaluator, see Chapter 5 for the questions, "How do I find somebody to help evaluate my program?" and "How do I know the evaluator is appropriate for my program?" or contact your funding source(s) for further guidance.

In a report, descriptive statistics can be presented efficiently in a variety of formats, such as narrative, tables, bar graphs or pie charts (see example, right, for summary table). Qualitative summaries are also important because it allows for the description of the "journey" using your own words or the words of other stakeholders. Commonly, qualitative information is organized in paragraphs, and bullets provide a convenient way to highlight important elements or examples.

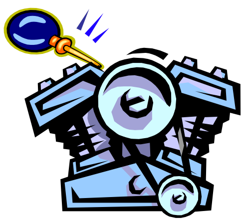
Example
Summary of Program Implementation Results: % Implemented as Scheduled

	Program		
School	1	2	3
A	80	60	60
B	90	70	80
C	95	80	100
Average	87	70	80

3d. What are the answers to the process performance questions? Using the summary information, answer each process performance question from Step 1. Remember to keep your answers brief, yet concise, and use supporting evidence (statistics, charts, narrative, etc.)

3e. How and when will the information be reported to stakeholders? Your answers to the process performance questions (from Step 1) will comprise part of the mid-year and year-end reports submitted to ODCP by all local SDFS Coordinators. The report forms, including an example of a completed report, are available in Appendix A and at the MDCH website www.mdch.gov/mdch. In addition, share process evaluation results with other stakeholders (e.g., SDFS Advisory Committee/Council, community coalitions, law enforcement, human service agencies) using a presentation format and venue that best suits the target audience.

Step 4: Enhance Performance: Make Program Adjustments and Increase Sustainability



To enhance the performance of your program, it is critical that you do two things:

4a. Use the process information to make adjustments to the program while preserving program fidelity. Use the process evaluation results to interpret the outcome results. For example, if poor results are found, analyze which aspects of the program contributed to those results. Was it poor program planning or training? Low buy-in from administrators or teachers? Poor implementation? Low participant attendance or cooperation? Keep in mind that any program adjustments should not diminish program fidelity. On the other hand, if a careful review of the processes and outcomes shows that the program is ineffective, other scientifically based programs should be instituted.

4b. Use the process information to increase sustainability. Use the process evaluation results related to planning, implementation and participation to identify ways in which the program can be streamlined to reduce cost, or modified to meet high demand. For example, sharing results about high participant cooperation might increase buy-in from the principal and teachers, who may in turn be more willing to make the program part of the core curriculum.

Process Evaluation Checklist

Process Evaluation Step And Suggested Timeline		Person(s) responsible	Date Complete	Notes:
Step 1: Focus on Performance Complete in year prior to program implementation.				
Jan. – Apr.	☐ Meet with Advisory Council/Committee to review Performance Questions and process evaluation steps.	Advisory Council	/ /	
Apr. – May	☐ Develop additional performance questions, if needed (For ideas, refer to high-performance questions, p. 25). 		/ /	
Step 2: Choose the Best Gauges Complete in year prior to program implementation.				
Apr. – May	☐ Select the best *indicators* (the types of information) to be collected		/ /	
Apr. – May	☐ Select the best *measures* (the tools) used to collect the information.		/ /	
Apr. – May	☐ Select the most appropriate *sources* (the people/places) from which to collect the information.		/ /	
Step 3: Check the Gauges Complete during program implementation.				
Apr. – May	☐ Identify who will collect the data for the various indicators, and by when.		/ /	
Quarterly	☐ Collect/Organize the data in a routine, timely manner. Collect as much process information as is feasible given the funding/time constraints. Refer to helpful hints on p. 29.		/ /	
May – Aug.	☐ Summarize the data based upon the performance questions to be answered.		/ /	
Aug.– Sep.	☐Use the summarized results to answer each performance question concisely and completely (using the ODCP report forms).		/ /	
Jan. & Sept.	Report your answers to the performance questions to ODCP.		/ /	
Jan., Sept.	☐ Share results with your local Advisory Council/Committee and other stakeholders.		/ /	
Step 4: Enhance Performance Complete during and after program implementation.				
Oct. – Dec.	☐ Use process information to make adjustments to the program while preserving fidelity.		/ /	
Oct. – Dec.	☐ Use process information to secure additional support and/or resources		/ /	

Notes: